

**CITY OF NORWALK
BIKE/WALK COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
JULY 11, 2022**

ATTENDANCE: Tanner Thompson, Chair; Colin Grotheer; Jud Aley; Emily Buraman

OTHERS: Greg Pacelli; Transportation Planner; TMP; Jahliah Green, Health Department; Carly Kramer; Redevelopment Agency; David Mendoza; Alex Keyes; Ben Hanpeter; Brian Boland; Gary Washinsky; Michael Mathews

To allow public access, anyone may access a meeting by telephone, Zoom, and/or the City of Norwalk YouTube channel. Specific instructions and links can be found at <http://www.norwalkct.org/meetings>.

1. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:00PM

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Michael Mathews

Mr. Mathews said that he has been noticing some traffic issues on Water Street and asked what the legacy of Water Street was in the past and if anyone else in the group had noticed the issues. Mr. Grotheer asked that Mr. Mathews be more specific on what kind of issue he is referring to. Mr. Mathews said that speeding is an issue every day and the speed limit is not observed by 30% to 40% of the cars, and it is also difficult to walk across Water Street from any of the adjacent streets and sees a traffic accident at least once a month over the past three months. Mr. Pacelli asked if there is any one section of Water Street where he is seeing the issues. Mr. Mathews said at the intersection of Water Street and Hanford Place. Mr. Pacelli said that Water Street is not listed on any of the planning documents that the city staff is currently working on, but staff can go out and collect some data and install some traffic counters. He went on to say that city staff does realize that there is higher density in the area with all the new developments and the lack of crossings that are available and that there is a need for better pedestrian amenities in the area but just like any other project that they work on they would want to get the data and measurables first before any decisions are made. Mr. Aley said asked the signal light at Hanford Place be tested on a blinking red so that it becomes a full stop intersection to help slow the traffic down. Mr. Pacelli said that staff with first look at the data and get a better sense of what is happening today as compared to a few years ago and then begin the decision-making process. He also said that Water Street is part of route 136 and is city maintained but is still state owned so any decisions would still have to go through the CTDOT for approval.

Mr. Grotheer noted that Elizabeth Street @ Water Street as well as Hanford Street @ Water Street are two areas that Mr. Mathews identified as problem areas.

Alex- Merrill Road

Alex asked for an update on the progress of the bridge on Strawberry Hill Avenue. Mr. Pacelli said they had a staff meeting this morning and Mr. Eshrashi who is overseeing the project said they had no new updates but they are continuing along with the improvements and are on schedule to complete the work but he has not been involved in the project so he can not provide any timelines as to when it will be completed. Mr. Thompson requested that Mr. Pacelli get an update and provide a status update at next months meeting.

Brian Boland- Ludlow Manor

Mr. Boland said that the catch basins were replaced on the bridge but were all parallel to each other and was an accident waiting to happen but have since been replaced which made him happy.

Mr. Mendosa- Bedford Avenue

Mr. Mendosa introduced himself and said he rides bikes and is excited to be here.

TMP UPDATES

- Highland Avenue SRTS Sidewalk project update

Mr. Pacelli said that the Highland Avenue safe routes to school project is scheduled to begin next Monday and will add one mile of sidewalk and two dozen ADA compliant ramps and crosswalks and is very happy to this happening after the years of planning and will complete the safe routes to school project that was done years ago. He said when this project is completed the road will be paved and will have striped bike lanes with 10' travel lanes and some portions of the sidewalk will have amenity zones as well and will include street trees and traffic calming measures. Mr. Thompson asked if the project will be completed by the fall before school starts. Mr. Pacelli said it is a very labor-intensive project and the intension is to get as much completed around the schools and once school starts will be clear those areas and will continue to work on the rest of the corridor and the intent is to have it completed by the end of the construction season this year.

- CT Connectivity Grant Update

Mr. Pacelli provided an update on the connectivity grant and said the final design plans and submission documents are being prepared to submit the Policy and Planning Bureau of CTDOT. He said there is paving that is planned on some of the roads and once that is completed the road will be restriped. Mr. Keyes asked if any of the new bike lanes are planned to be protected. Mr. Pacelli said "no" but there are areas that will have a 3' buffer and the city does not have the maintenance staff or equipment to clear the bike lanes, but this is a steppingstone project as there are no bike lanes at all in some of these areas and there is grant money that can be used to install bike lanes.

- Artistic Bike Racks

Mr. Pacelli said a bike rack was installed near the Maritime Aquarium as well as a SONO bike rack on Washington Street and have received a lot of positive feedback regarding both and would like to install more around the city. He requested that the members of the commission and anyone else who would like to get involved to discuss other possible locations. Mr. Thompson suggested that someone from Recreation and Parks also be part of the working group. Mr. Ebert asked what the plan is to have them fabricated. Mr. Pacelli said Dero is the company that the city has been using. Mr. Aley asked how the price of an artistic bike rack compares to that of a regular bike rack. Mr. Pacelli said he will get that information and present it at the next meeting.

- Roundabout at Gregory Blvd. at Fifth Street

Mr. Pacelli said that an RFP will go out for design services for the roundabout at Gregory Blvd. and Fifth Street and will make significant pedestrian and bicycle improvements at the intersection to Calf Pasture Beach Road. Mr. Thompson asked where the funding will come from for the construction. Mr. Pacelli said that they will need to find additional funds for the construction portion of the project. Mr. Aley asked when the project will be completed. Mr. Pacelli said he does not have an estimated timeline and is dependent on the funding. Mr. Grotheer asked where the project falls in the list of priorities. Mr. Pacelli said the money is in the capital budget and they want to be aggressive with putting the RFP together for design and the consultant with probably need six months to one year to perform the full design and the other portion will be to find the funding for construction.

- Intersection Improvements at Soundview Ave. at Cliff Street

Mr. Pacelli said that TMP and DPW have worked together to install new sidewalks and ramps at Soundview, Cliff Street and Oak Street and will also be making a an all way stop control and will have crosswalks on all lengths of the intersection and once that has been completed Soundview Avenue will be paved and will improve walkability around this neighborhood as well.

- Complete Streets Design Guidance

Mr. Pacelli said the RFP is out and over the next couple of weeks will be interviewing two consultants to develop the guidelines and is a priority to get done and will continue to update the commission on the process.

REPORT ON SCAVENGER HUNT & POETRY EVENT

Ms. Buraman provided an update and said the Poet Laureate of Norwalk read the poem for the bike rack poetic bike parking challenge at the library and the event was held two weeks ago and was a good event and hopes that it can be done again next year. She said some of the signs for the scavenger hunt are still on some of the bike racks and will need to be removed.

BICYCLE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES' APPLICATION

Mr. Thompson said the League of American Bicyclists advocates for policy at the national level and provides a lot of resources for local groups to make their communities and businesses more bicycle friendly and have a program called Bicycle Friendly America. He shared the application said he has started the application process but it is very long. Mr. Pacelli said the timeline to submit the application is in September or February and as Mr. Thompson mentioned it is an in-depth application process and staff would rather wait until February to submit because they are currently working on the connectivity grant which will increase the number of bike lanes in the city, as well as the complete streets guidebook and also want to get the NRV completed as well and will get a higher rating if projects are completed. Mr. Grotheer suggested submitting the application in September and then apply again later to show the progress that has been made with the projects that will be completed. Mr. Thompson said he believes the application can be submitted each time there is a deadline agrees with Mr. Grotheer to apply early not only to show improvement but to also get feedback. He said additionally Mr. Bisceglie pointed out to him that as soon as a designation is awarded that the league will write letters of support for any grants that are applied for that are for bike infrastructure and asked Mr. Pacelli his thoughts on applying in September. Mr. Pacelli said staff is working on numerous ongoing projects and there is a lot of data that needs to be submitted from their end and don't think they can meet that deadline and agreed that February would be more beneficial to the city. After further discussion Mr. Grotheer and Mr. Aley agreed to wait until February to apply. Mr. Thompson said he would further research the application and will be discussed at next month's meeting.

DECIDE WHETHER TO MEET IN AUGUST

Mr. Thompson said there is a meeting scheduled in August and historically the commission has opted not to meet in August and asked the commission their opinion on whether to hold the meeting in August or not. The commissioners decided that they will meet in August as scheduled.

APPROVE MINUTES FROM JUNE MEETINGS

**** MR. EBERT MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 6, 2022, AS SUBMITTED.**
**** MR. GROTHEER SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF JUNE 27, 2022, AS SUBMITTED.**
**** MR. GROTHEER SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. ALEY MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
**** MR. EBERT SECONDED THE MOTION.**
**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:32PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Dilene Byrd